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Governor Baker Nominates Three to Massachusetts Probate and Family Court

BOSTON – Governor Charlie Baker has nominated attorneys Melanie Gargas and Lee Peterson to the Probate and Family Court, the adjudicating body over matters including divorce, child support, parental rights, wills and estates, and has nominated The Honorable Geoffrey German, a Probate and Family Court Judge sitting in Springfield, for a similar post in Worcester.

“Through skill, hard work and dedication to their profession, these individuals have provided top notch representation to Massachusetts families during difficult and complex domestic legal proceedings,” **said Governor Baker**. “I am confident that the Court will be strengthened by their service and willingness to apply their extensive knowledge of the Probate and Family Court in service of residents who require its fair and impartial decision-making.”

“I am pleased that Judge German will continue his distinguished experience on the Court in Worcester, where he practiced for two decades, and that two attorneys as accomplished as Melanie Gargas and Lee Peterson are willing to dedicate themselves to serving Massachusetts families in this honorable and essential capacity,” **said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito**.

Applicants for judicial openings are reviewed by the Judicial Nominating Commission and recommended to the Governor. All judicial nominations are subject to the advice and consent of the Governor’s Council.

About The Honorable Geoffrey R. German:

Judge Geoffrey R. German of Worcester, MA was born in San Antonio, TX. He graduated from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in 1981 with a Bachelor of Arts and as a Commonwealth Scholar, and from New England School of Law in 1984. In 1985, he began in private practice, including bar advocate work and appointments in care and protection proceedings in the Juvenile Court. In 1993, he opened his own practice until his appointment to the Hampden County bench in 2014 .

About Melanie J. Gargas:

Melanie J. Gargas of Newton, MA was born in Peabody and graduated from Suffolk University with a Bachelor of Science in Sociology and Suffolk University Law School in 1990. Gargas' law career of 24 years began with positions as a Law Clerk and later an Associate at Atwood & Cerhny, in Boston. Following four years as an Associate at the domestic relations practice at Taylor, Anderson & Travers, Attorneys Travers and Gargas formed Travers & Gargas, in 1995. Since 2000, she has been Principal at her own firm and has represented clients in divorce, child custody, modification and contempt actions, restraining orders and probate litigation.

About Lee M. Peterson:

Lee M. Peterson of Dedham, MA, graduated from Boston College with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology in 1994, Simmons College School of Social Work with a Masters in Social Work in 1996 and Suffolk University Law School in 2003. Peterson's career began at the Norfolk Probate & Family Court, where she worked first as a Probation Officer and later as Assistant Judicial Case Manager. Over ten years, she assisted attorneys and litigants while conducting research for Probate & Family Court justices. Since 2005, Peterson has been an Associate at the law firm of McCarter & English in Boston, specializing in probate and family law, including domestic relations, child custody, trust and estates and guardianship matters.

For more information about the Massachusetts Probate and Family Court, visit <http://www.mass.gov/courts/court-info/trial-court/pfc/>.

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